

# SweatFree Communities Grows

## New Organizer to Focus on Sweatfree Consortium Campaign

January 7, 2008-- SweatFree Communities is happy to announce that Victoria Kaplan has joined us as Midwest Regional Organizer. Ms. Kaplan will focus her work on the formation of the [State and Local Government Sweatfree Consortium](#), a consortium of government entities that will work to end public purchasing from sweatshops.

"The anti-sweatshop movement was where I first became inspired to work for social justice," said Ms. Kaplan. "I'm excited to join SweatFree Communities now to help build the grassroots power to ensure that our tax dollars aren't spent on goods made in sweatshops."

Victoria Kaplan most recently served as Organizing Director of Food & Water Watch, where she conducted and oversaw campaigns to challenge the corporate control and abuse of our food and water resources. During the 2006 midterm elections Ms. Kaplan worked as a field organizer with Citizens Trade Campaign PAC to elect a pivotal 37 fair trade advocates to Congress. She earned a BA in Cultural Anthropology from Duke University, where she was a leader in United Students Against Sweatshops' successful campaign with the Farm Labor Organizing Committee to secure North Carolina's first labor contract for farm workers. She is a graduate of Green Corps' organizing training program, and has been an active volunteer with Jews United for Justice. She speaks both English and Spanish.

"Victoria Kaplan is an exceptional organizer and has a track record of significant accomplishments. We're thrilled that she will be joining our organization and the sweatfree movement," said Bjorn Claeson, Executive Director of SweatFree Communities.

Beginning her work with SweatFree Communities in mid-February, 2008, Ms. Kaplan will focus on supporting and coordinating sweatfree campaigns in states and cities in the Midwest, an area with a large concentration of potential Consortium members, while also supporting public entities across the United States in joining the Consortium. Ms. Kaplan's position is funded by grants from cities committed to developing the Consortium, including San Francisco and Berkeley, California.

The State and Local Government Consortium will advance shared efforts to ensure that tax dollars do not pay for products made in sweatshops. While over 180 states, cities, counties, and school districts in the United States have adopted "sweatfree" procurement policies, no single public entity has adequate resources to monitor and verify working conditions and enforce sweatfree standards at supplier factories beyond their immediate jurisdiction.

The Consortium will pool resources of public entities to investigate working conditions in factories that make uniforms and other products for public employees. Cities and states will hold vendors to the same standards, use the same independent monitor for enforcement, and create a

market large enough to persuade companies to deal responsibly and ethically with their suppliers and workers.